1. Essay on the several Dispensations of God to Mankind in the Order in which they lie in the Bible - 1728
2 Remarks on the several Answers to a Pamphlet intitled Xtianity not founded on Argument.
3. A Review of the genuine Doctrines of Xtianity comprehending Remarks on several principal Calvinistical Doctrines - By Joseph Fawcett 1763
4. The Nature & necessity of Catechising - 1746.
5. Observations on the Conduct & Character of Judas Iscariot 1751.

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THE

NATURE and NECESSITY

OF

CATECHISING:

BY

A Divine of the Church of *England.*

WITH

Some *Remarks* thereon,

AND

Propoſals for the more effectual carrying it into execution; by another Hand.

Dr Law Bp of Carlisle —

Edmund Law

CAMBRIDGE,

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MDCCXLVI.

To the Moſt Reverend the

ARCHBISHOPS,

The Right Reverend the

BISHOPS,

AND

The reſt of the CLERGY

OF THE

CHURCH of *ENGLAND*,

The following Papers

Are moſt humbly Dedicated, and with all Duty and Deference ſubmitted

By the Authors.

THE

Nature and Neceſſity of *Catechiſing*.

IT ſeems to be one great happineſs of the preſent age, that ſtrife about words, and a blind zeal for opinions viſibly abates, but then it is no leſs viſible that a true zeal and juſt concern for the ſubſtantials of Religion is abating likewiſe; and if this be not ſome way remedied, there is room to apprehend that we may ſoon fall as far ſhort of former times in point of practice, as we exceed them in all parts of ſpeculation. In order therefore to remove the growing levity and lukewarmneſs in ſubjects of this kind, at leaſt prevent it from infecting the next generation; to reſtore that ſober ſenſe of and regard for theſe things which the importance of them muſt require; it may be proper to look back a little to the foundations of Religion amongſt us, and ſee how rationally they are laid, and whether any improvement may be hoped for in this reſpect. Now theſe foundations are laid when we commence Chriſtians, and this we properly do when in our own perſons we undertake to perform our part of the Baptiſmal Covenant: till this be done, we are not in ſtrictneſs bound to any particular mode or profeſſion of Religion; I mean, by any thing that others have deſigned or undertaken for us, (who in truth can only engage for themſelves, and certify what they will inſtruct us in, invite and exhort us to, and as far as in them lies, cauſe *us* to undertake; and who are accordingly required to be themſelves above the ſtate of *Childhood*, and

to have *communicated* with the Church before they can be regularly admitted to bring others into it. *Canon* 29.) And therefore I have placed the commencement of Chriſtianity not ſo much in any operation performed on us, any dedication of us, or ſtipulation for us in our Infancy, as in our actual entrance on the Chriſtian life; when the Religion of *Chriſt* begins in ſome degree to affect our underſtanding and determine our conſcience; when it becomes our own choice, rather than the effect of chance, of the conſtitution or cuſtom of the country wherein we were born: and this, I think, is with the generality in our Church to be dated from their *Confirmation*. What efficacy the adminiſtration of *Baptiſm* may have upon the ſouls of thoſe who die before they come to the uſe of reaſon; — what authority there is for adminiſtring it to ſuch, — or what neceſſity for the continuance of it to any other beſide thoſe who come under the character of Proſelytes: — theſe are queſtions which I do not at all meddle with at preſent; but ſhall only beg leave to obſerve, that in what circumſtances ſoever this Rite be adminiſtred, in order to make it a reaſonable ſervice, ſuch an office as that of Confirmation with us ſeems very fit to follow, and a good deal of inſtruction to attend both of them as cloſely as poſſible. For that Baptiſm which alone has an effect on our ſalvation the Apoſtle plainly ſhews us [1 *Pet.* 3. 21.] muſt have this, not in itſelf, by virtue of the external act, and abſolutely depending on any certain perſon, matter, form; or operating like a charm; but in a moral, intellectual manner; and ſo as to affect the heart

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and influence the temper: it is *not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good Conscience toward God:* not the mere outward ceremony of washing and cleansing the body, but a most efficacious means of purifying and preparing the mind for heavenly things; including a solemn contract between God and us, whereby we engage to devote ourselves to *Christ*, and be his true Disciples; and God promises on our performing such engagement to forgive us our sins, and bring us to eternal life: and therefore implying a sincere conscientious declaration of our faith and resolution as to those several articles both of belief and practice, concerning which we are there properly *interrogated*. Now as all this is supposed to be done for us in our Infancy, and the chief parts of consequence transacted in our stead by proxy, the subsequent rite of Confirmation comes in very seasonably to supply the unavoidable defects of such a transaction, to constitute this primary religious Office of a piece with all the rest, and what each man's Religion ought to be, a *personal* thing; to render us complete members of the Christian Church, and fulfil the institution which our Lord has left for making his Disciples; *Matt.* 28. 19. And wisely has our Church appointed that we should be called to this just when we come to years of discretion, and are entering on a tempting, treacherous world; just as the lusts of the flesh begin to exert themselves, and gather strength upon us; and our great Adversary is lying in wait, and laying all his baits to ensnare us. Against each of these (which we before vowed to resist, and which are now forming their assault)

does the Church carefully prepare and arm its members, by reminding them of their engagements, and bringing them to a publick acknowledgement and repetition of them ; by fortifying them with reſolutions, and directing them to the means of keeping theſe engagements ; by ſupplying them with ſuitable inſtructions on ſuch an occaſion ; by offering up her prayers, with them and for them, to that end. Thus are young perſons happily initiated in the ſervice of their Maker: this gives religious principles an early and ſure poſſeſſion both of the head and heart : this one good work, if properly attended and diſcharged with due qualifications, would not fail to ſtrike them with that reverence and awe, and give ſo right a turn to their whole way of thinking, as would be remembered by them (as it has been by numbers) and retained, all their lives after. It muſt imprint in them ſo deep and lively a ſenſe of their duty, as would in a natural way put them on ſome proportionable endeavours to perform it, and prove the beſt means of entitling them to the Divine aſſiſtance, and deriving on them all thoſe *manifold gifts of grace*, which are there ſummed up, and particularly requeſted.

Let us in the next place obſerve the common practiſe of this part of the world in theſe reſpects. And firſt for *Baptiſm*. Many are extremely ſolicitous about their Children being admitted to it forthwith in a private way, eſpecially if they be not very like to live, (though to thoſe only who do are moſt parts of the Office evidently appropriated) on the leaſt indiſpoſition the Clergyman is ſent for at all hours of Day or Night, and they

they grow quite inconſolable if any one ſhould happen to die unbaptized on any account: but if that Ceremony once be got huddled over, they think all is done, or are very willing to truſt Providence for the reſt. As to Inſtruction, whether private or publick, about that they are eaſy enough, and rather inclined to put it off year after year, and paſs it from one hand to another. As for thoſe *Sponſors* who are to attend the publick adminiſtration of Baptiſm, who are ſo ſtrictly charged and ſolemnly engaged *to ſee that the Child be taught ſo ſoon as he ſhall be able to learn* what was there done in his behalf; theſe when they have either perſonally appeared to ſatisfy the cuſtom, and do credit to their Neighbour, or ſent ſome Deputation to that purpoſe, and diſcharged their Fees, ſeldom concern themſelves any farther about this Child, than upon ſet viſits to own ſome ſort of faſhionable relation to it, and now and then make it ſome preſent; or, if they ſhould be called upon, perhaps attend it once more to the Biſhop, and that too either for mere form's ſake, or in order to procure a releaſe from all thoſe ſtipulations which they formerly entered into upon its account, and which they never once beſtowed a thought on ſince.

Which brings me to the next grand point of *Confirmation*: And this, it muſt be likewiſe owned, is either groſsly neglected by too many for the greateſt part of their lives, or haſtily attended where and whenever it falls in their way: it is in the ſame manner treated as a ceremony, under which they are quite paſſive; looked on as little more than the Biſhop's Bleſſing, which moſt peo-

people think may do them good as oft as they can have it, and to which therefore perſons of all ages will flock in a confuſed, tumultuary way, notwithſtanding all the care that Biſhops or Parochial Clergy take to regulate it. So apt are people at all times to reſt in ſhew, rather then enter into the meaning, or endeavour to comply with the intention of a rite! ſo ready to place Religion and the favour of God in ſome ſlight, empty, mechanical performance, of their own or of others for them, rather than in thoſe real, ſolid, rational duties which reform and rectify the inward man, and are able to produce ſettled *habits* of Piety and Virtue; thoſe true and only terms of acceptance which himſelf preſcribes! And though great pains have lately been taken, and many uſeful treatiſes are daily publiſhed, to aſſiſt and improve Youth in almoſt all other parts of Science, and the means thereto, yet is the ſcience of Religion, properly ſo called, left in great meaſure ſtill uncultivated; and theſe neglects and abuſes tolerated in the eſtabliſhed adminiſtration of its ordinances. How theſe and the like may be remedied comes next under conſideration.

Now the moſt natural if not the only method to recover a right apprehenſion of theſe things, ſeems to be a proper manner of *Catechiſing*. By catechiſing I mean, not the procuring that our own or any other Catechiſm, or Compend of Divinity, be ſaid over ſome few times by rote; nor the delivering any ſtated Expoſition, Catechetical Lecture or Diſcourſe thereon; though theſe may be of great uſe in their turns; but the frequent, familiar exerciſing of young perſons in it,

it, until they can thoroughly understand and express the meaning of each word and phrase; till they have learnt to invent and apply words of their own; by putting it out of its present form, and altering both the terms and method of it as occasion serves; by turning the same subject into different lights, conveying the same thoughts in various dress, and teaching them to give their notions of the thing as much as possible in their own way and language: gently instilling into their minds the first elements of religious knowledge, and again drawing them forth diversly according to the Child's capacity, experience and improvement: thus leading them on gradually from sounds to sense; forming their thoughts and fixing their attention to the reason and connection of things; aiding and inuring them to reflect a little on such points as are within their reach; and at length enabling them to give a clear account of all parts of the Christian Dispensation, and be fully acquainted with their duty both to God and man.

This is the office of Catechising: which though it may be deemed a common and contemptible one, yet is assuredly a rare and arduous task, and which perhaps requires the greatest pains and skill of any part of the whole ministerial function. Nor has it of late, so far as I know, been distinctly treated of: how seldom, and with how small care it is performed amongst us, may not be so proper for me to set forth. However, it must be allowed that we fall far short of the ancient practice on this head; as appears both from the accounts we have of so many famous

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CATECHETICAL SCHOOLS eſtabliſhed in the times of primitive Chriſtianity, and from ſome exerciſes of the ſeveral eminent maſters in them, which are yet extant: from which we may conclude that in thoſe ages this would not have been eſteemed a work fit to be truſted wholly to the Curate, and much leſs left to Parents, Pariſh Clerks, or petty School-maſters; though the aſſiſtance of all theſe in private be very uſeful and even neceſſary to prepare and train up Children for the performance of it in the Congregation. At preſent this is a work which many, either diſcouraged by diſuſe and the low deſpicable notions which are too apt to be entertained of it, or deterred by its difficulty; are extremely ſhy of undertaking. Some have not the heart, ſome not the face, to ſet about it: moſt content themſelves with cauſing the Church Catechiſm, or a comment on it, to be repeated in the time of *Lent*, or ſome few *Sundays* after; and if they continue to hear the Children employed in this till they can ſay every word in order, think that they have amply done their parts in this reſpect. But the Church of God in former times, both among *Jews* and *Chriſtians*, underſtood his precepts and their duty on the point before us in a different manner: and whether our own Church by requiring (as ſhe does in her rubrick after the Catechiſm and 59th *Canon*) *every Parſon, Vicar or Curate to teach, inſtruct and examine the Youth and ignorant perſons of his Pariſh, in ſome part of the Catechiſm, for half an hour or more every Sunday and Holy-day; and all Fathers, Maſters,* &c. *to cauſe their Children, Servants and Apprentices to come at the time appointed obe-*

obediently to hear and be ordered by the Miniſter; and this with ſo high a Penalty on each for their neglect as Excommunication once was deemed; whether, I ſay, ſhe means only their being taught to repeat ſome portion of this Catechiſm by rote, I leave to be conſidered. Sure I am, Catechiſing in its original true ſenſe implies a little more than the bare running over an old form, though that conſiſt of queſtion and anſwer, and contain whatſoever is needful either to belief or manners; and though our own be as plain, clear, comprehenſive, and in many reſpects as good as moſt, yet is there ſtill room for ſome intermediate queſtions and elucidations before every point of Doctrine in it may be rightly underſtood, and well digeſted. Witneſs the definition of a *Sacrament*, wherein the latter part refers ſometimes to the nearer branch of the foregoing; ſometimes to the more remote; and where, beſide the explanation of theſe terms *viſible ſign* and *ſpiritual grace*, it may not be improper to aſk, what it is which is *given unto us*; what was *ordained by Chriſt himſelf*; how is that ſign, or viſible thing, *a means whereby* we receive *the ſame*, *i.e.* inward, inviſible Grace: and what is a *Pledge*, and how comes this to be ſuch a thing as can aſſure us *thereof*, *i.e.* of our receiving and becoming poſſeſſed of this Grace upon the application of that ſign: as alſo in general, what goes to the making of a Sacrament? who is the Author or ordainer of it? to whom, and for what end appointed? *&c.* Again, the reply to the ſecond and third queſtions in our Catechiſm will admit almoſt as many queries to unfold them as they contain principal words. Our Duty

towards God and our Neighbour requires to have each part of it applied to that particular commandment of which it is designed to be explanatory: and so likewise in that which follows the Lord's Prayer. — But I am not about to propose any determinate set of queries, or fixed method of explanation: which must entirely depend on the Child's comprehension, and vary according to the answers given. Of such we have enough already, and the shortest and easiest the best. For whatever form of words is used in this case, when it becomes a *Form*, and is once gotten by heart, it comes almost to the same thing; and our own, as was said, may do as well as any, if persons be but duly versed and exercised therein. Here is the point; and all that is wanting here is only first to understand the words and their construction, so as to get the main substance, or the general doctrines of Religion inculcated into our Catechumen, and when this is done effectually, he may be carried on at leisure to what lengths we please; or otherwise directed to more accurate discourses on each head; and will be able in good measure to judge for himself, and edify by his own perusal of them.

But let not the Catechist be soon wearied out, nor straightway dejected at the slow progress he shall make, and the seemingly small effect of his labours at the first. The minds of Children will be found to open insensibly, and his way of accommodating himself to them grow more apt and easy: their courage and his own will be continually improving, and the whole conduct of the thing become more natural and more agreeable on every fresh attempt.

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Many are indeed the real lets and impediments attending this, and more the excuſes for poſtponing and omitting it. Among the poorer ſort, Children are oft otherwiſe employed, interrupted and taken from School before they have been tolerably prepared, or even taught to aim at ſaying any thing out of the common road. Among perſons of Condition (who ſhould know theſe things better and judge of them with more juſtneſs) their Children are generally thought above mixing with the reſt, and being ſubjected to ſuch publick, particular examinations. Servants and grown up people (how ignorant ſoever) are unwilling to ſubmit to them, and aſhamed of ſtanding expoſed to the whole Congregation; many of whom likewiſe are but too apt, in the beginning more eſpecially, to betray ſome unuſual levity, to entertain themſelves with remarking and ridiculing any the leaſt miſtake, oddity, or impropriety on ſuch occaſions. —— But all ſuch difficulties as theſe will ſoon be over when this cuſtom is once introduced, and for a while perſiſted in: when each party becomes engaged and meets with encouragement according to their induſtry and ingenuity therein: and all thoſe hardſhips will in time be amply recompenſed by the viſible *benefits* accruing to all that are either immediately or more remotely affected by it: which I proceed to touch on very briefly.

From what has been ſaid it is eaſy to perceive, 1. How much this cuſtom would by proper exerciſe inlarge, ſtrengthen and ripen all the powers of reaſon in young perſons: and 2. remove that vicious baſhfulneſs and inability to ſpeak in publick,

which is ſo mightily prejudicial to moſt people with us; and thereby of what ſervice it would be both to the Maſter and Scholar. 3. By being thus early grounded in the true faith we ſhould help greatly to prevent the growth of Infidelity, and guard againſt the prevailing errors of Popery, or Fanaticiſm, or any others. 4. This would ſoon give a right notion of Religion, and ſhew that it depends not on a ſet of technical terms, or trifling ceremonies; not on any ſubtle diſtinctions, or ſuperficial niceties; but conſiſts in a few plain facts and rules of life, with the moſt eaſy, intelligible rites inducing us to enter on, and to continue the belief and practiſe of them. 5. This would not only lay a foundation for the inſtruction of Youth and improvement of the following generation, but ſerve to remind the preſent what they have hitherto been doing, or engaged to do in the affair of their Salvation; it may help to excite all hearers to a proper recollection of what they once learnt, or ought to have learnt, on this ſubject, and above all things conduce to the making each of the abovementioned offices more uſeful: to anſwer the intents of Baptiſm by what was done in our Infancy, and to retrieve the credit of that once valuable inſtitution of Sponſors, but which, we may perceive by what has been already ſaid, is now ſo much degenerated, as to become matter of ſcandal to Diſſenters, and of triumph to Unbelievers, and of ſo little benefit to ourſelves as makes it doubtful whether it be worth retaining.

That any thing of a religious kind ſhould be mere matter of form is ever of bad conſequence. When an appointment howſoever excellent at firſt,

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(and the more ſo, moſt commonly the worſe is its corruption) dwindles into an empty unmeaning piece of pageantry; it then turns to a detriment and a diſgrace; it introduces an habitual neglect of ſacred things, infects the minds of men, and teaches them to look on all in the ſame light, and paſs them over in the like *formal lifeleſs* way. It is true, the care of Parents, ſo long as they live and continue of the ſame Profeſſion, may now-a-days be generally eſteemed ſufficient for the education of their offspring: but may it not be aſked then, why are theſe other aſſurances ſtill given and required with ſuch ſolemnity, if no more be intended by them? And though a collateral ſecurity be in moſt caſes reckoned an advantage, and was no doubt originally ſo in this, and therefore no objection lies againſt the appointment in itſelf; yet as it now ſtands it is no ſecurity at all; and can ſerve, I fear, only to reproach us: as may perhaps be the caſe with ſome other things originally of great uſe and expedience in the Church. — But it is not our province to direct the Church, nor of ſo much ſervice to cenſure and complain of any Inſtitutions which remain without effect, as to try all we can to recover thoſe we have to their full purpoſe; to render them of ſome apparent uſe among ourſelves, and thereby recommend them more effectually to others: which ſeems moſt likely to be done in the way propoſed, *viz.* by conſidering the nature and the ſubject of each in a due courſe of *Catechiſing*; and which is therefore one ſtrong recommendation of it. 6. Nor will there be other motives wanting to encourage patience and perſeverance in this, which at firſt

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ſight ſeems ſo forbidding an attempt: ſuch as are drawn from a ſatisfaction to obſerve the riſe and original dawnings of reaſon, and the daily growth of knowledge in young minds: (and the younger they are the quicker will their progreſs be) from a ſenſe of our being inſtrumental in the formation, as it were, and furtherance of ſo many both reaſonable and religious creatures: from a conſciouſneſs of having well diſcharged this ſo important, though at the ſame time ſo ſlighted, a duty: and from a comfortable aſſurance that our recompence will be the greater and the more entire in another world, inaſmuch as we receive the leſs retribution of eſteem or love for it in this. Farther, to animate and quicken our endeavours, we ought to conſider (as the Church reminds us on another occaſion) that our Lord himſelf thought it not below him to admit little Children to his preſence, take them up in his arms, lay his hands upon them and bleſs them; and that he has hereby ſet us an example of ſhewing our good will to ſuch by doing all we can to advance their ſpiritual intereſt; and proved (not in any figurative, ſymbolical way; but by the moſt ſignificant, expreſs declaration) that this is by no means foreign to the Paſtoral Office.

Let all men therefore heartily concur in and contribute ſomewhat to this excellent work; adding their warmeſt wiſhes, prayers, intereſt and endeavours for the accompliſhment thereof. Well were all theſe laid out, and happy might we think ourſelves, could any thing of this kind prove effectual to excite a proper ſpirit in all orders and degrees amongſt us: a true zeal, ſtudy, reſolution in the Clergy faithfully to diſcharge their truſt,

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and painfully perform this ſo very uſeful, unexceptionable part of their vocation: a good inclination in Parents, Maſters and Heads of Families, to prepare, urge and encourage all their Children and Dependents: a juſt regard in ſuch as have been Sureties to enquire what ſort of proviſion has been made for thoſe for whom they themſelves were once charged before God *chiefly to provide*; and an inſpection (not merely out of compliment and curioſity, but in good earneſt) into their reſpective attainments and behaviour under it: a diſpoſition in the whole congregation to attend with ſerioufneſs and due compoſure: in ſhort, the care and countenance, the approbation and influence, of all perſons in each ſtation and relation; in the Church and out of it; in Town and Country.

All this, were thus much to be hoped for, is little enough to recover the right uſe of a too long neglected Inſtitution; which yet appears to be ſo neceſſary to all parts of Chriſtian Faith and Worſhip, that without laying a ſure groundwork here, the whole ſuperſtructure can be built only on the Sand, (*Matt.* 7. 27.) and will accordingly ſink upon trial, and in time of temptation fall away: at beſt, each ſubſequent religious ordinance muſt be but very imperfectly perform'd, and with as little benefit to the performers.

Once more then, let all, as they rate theſe ſeveral advantages, lend their aſſiſtance to the ſecurity and preſervation of them by the forementioned means; which is at all times ſo much in each perſon's power to promote, and in the duty of pro-

promoting which every one has ſo large a ſhare, as well as in the bleſſing.

Were we but once ſufficiently perſwaded of this; could we be prevailed on to give our attention to it; then would true piety be found to revive in theſe degenerate days, and virtue flouriſh; and our Church at length become the joy of the whole Nation. Thus might we ſee this ancient and ever valuable practiſe perfectly reſtored, and with it a true ſenſe, ſincere eſteem, and pure profeſſion of the Goſpel; to the glory of its Author and the laſting good of Mankind; to the ſalvation and ſuperior happineſs of our own Souls, and of all thoſe committed to our charge. *Amen.*

SIR,

TO the Treatiſe on *Catechiſing* I can ſee but one objection, though I think it will admit of ſeveral improvements. The objection is, that *Infant Baptiſm* ſeems a little depreciated, as if Infants were incapable of ſpiritual Bleſſings. It muſt be acknowledged that Baptiſm does not operate like a charm, and when performed without ſerioufneſs in the Parents, may have little or no efficacy. But we are bound to believe, that by virtue of the Parents faith, which is the principal thing requiſite in Baptiſm, it may be the means of deriving ſpiritual Bleſſings. He that heartily devotes his Child to God, according to Chriſt's Inſtitution, performs no vain Ceremony, but ſomething truly beneficial to himſelf and his Child.

The improvements which this Treatiſe ſeems to require are chiefly the propoſing of ſome proper means to facilitate the work. I am ſenſible without a Pariſh-School Children cannot be brought under proper diſcipline and duly prepared for Catechiſing; Might not the Author then ſubjoin ſome Propoſals for erecting *Schools* in all Pariſhes where they are wanted?

The Children ſhould be diſtributed into ſeveral Forms or Claſſes, according to their age and capacity. I ſee no neceſſity for Catechiſing before the Congregation; if it is performed after Divine Service, the People will be at liberty to ſtay or go as they pleaſe.

Why ſhould the Author ſend this piece into the world in ſo obſcure a manner? Why don't

he addreſs it to the Biſhops and Clergy, and call upon them loudly to ſet about that neceſſary work?

I have incloſed a ſketch of ſuch Propoſals as ſeemed chiefly wanting, with ſome account of the occaſion for them, and the uſes of them, and am

Yours.

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Propoſals *for erecting of* Engliſh Schools *in all the Pariſhes of* England, *for the benefit of the Poor, and for the farther regulating and improving of thoſe that are already erected.*

THE decay of Chriſtian Piety and the increaſe of Sin and Vice are ſo viſible in our days, notwithſtanding the endeavours hitherto uſed to prevent them; that it is to be hoped any expedient which may be offered for putting a ſtop to this growing evil will be favourably received by all well-diſpoſed perſons.

It is a melancholy conſideration that in a land where the Goſpel of *Chriſt* is held forth in its greateſt purity, ſo many Children for want of being taught to read, ſhould for ever be deprived of one of the beſt means of Chriſtian knowledge and piety, and ſuffered to paſs that period of life which might be ſo beneficially employed, in rambling, in idleneſs, and contracting habits of ſloth and vice. And what is no leſs to be lamented, of thoſe who are ſo happy as to be taught to read,

too

too many have little farther care taken of their Education; being generally put to ſchool to ſome Woman of the place, who neither can furniſh their minds with the religious knowledge they are capable of, and form them to virtue, nor has authority to reſtrain their vicious inclinations, and to govern their morals. Thus a great part of our Youth grow up; their minds uninformed with religious truths, their morals deſtitute of proper care and diſcipline; left to the propenſities of nature, and the prevailing influence of bad examples. And when this happens to be the caſe, the Pariſh Miniſter can only lament their misfortune and his own; for unleſs by an extraordinary Divine Grace they ſhould be awakened to a ſenſe of their condition, there is great cauſe to fear they will reſiſt or avoid any future endeavours that may be uſed to inſtruct and reclaim them. There are various cauſes to which this evil may be attributed: Parents from the lowneſs of their Circumſtances, or the largeneſs of their Families, are many times unable to procure for their Children the benefit of a plain and virtuous Education: and where that is not the caſe, a fit perſon may be wanted to teach them, and to inſpect their behaviour while the Parents are abroad at their labour. But the moſt general cauſe is the corruption and negligence of the Parents; who if void of a true ſenſe of Religion themſelves, will be at no pains or expence to procure that bleſſing to their unfortunate Children. And unleſs it be made the buſineſs either of the Parent or a Schoolmaſter to prepare them and bring them to the Pariſh Miniſter, to be catechiſed and inſtructed,

he may never have it in his power to do them any material ſervice.

The remedy for this evil ſeems very obvious; *viz.* the inſtituting in every Pariſh a regular method of educating the Youth: they muſt be reſcued from the negligence of their unnatural Parents, and committed to the care and diſcipline of a Man properly qualified to inſtruct and govern them: and the Pariſh Miniſter will by this means have an opportunity put into his hands to catechiſe them as often as he ſhall think proper, and in a manner ſuited to their capacity. The preſent Age, it muſt be acknowledged to the Glory of God, has diſtinguiſhed itſelf by a pious zeal for propagating the Truths of our holy Religion, as well as by an uncommon ſpirit of Charity to the poor. While we are carrying on this laudable deſign in Foreign Parts, it were to be wiſhed we did not overlook our Brethren at Home; whoſe condition (as to many of them) no leſs calls for our Chriſtian compaſſion; and whoſe nearer relation to us gives them a prior claim to it.

If the Charity-Schools erected in *Ireland* and the Highlands of *Scotland*, and the circulating * Schools in *Wales*, have been found ſo ſerviceable to

* Since theſe Papers were ſent to the Preſs, I had the pleaſure of peruſing a moſt excellent account of this extraordinary undertaking, in the *Letter to a Clergyman*, together with the numbers entitled *Welch Piety continued*, which have indeed exhauſted the whole ſubject; and as well by producing proper authorites, as by the moſt powerful motives and the moſt pertinent example, have in the cleareſt manner evinced the neceſſity and vindicated this method of inſtruction; demonſtrating what may be done in it by a due zeal and diligence from ſome of the ſmalleſt and leaſt promiſing beginnings.

to the ends of Religion, what might we reaſonably hope for, were the like method to be inſtituted in every Pariſh of *England?* And it is pity methinks, that while we annually contribute towards the ſupport of theſe Schools, any Pariſh of our

ginnings. Theſe Papers are well worthy to be read and recommended by all ſuch as have a true concern for one of the moſt effectual and moſt unexceptionable means of civilizing and improving mankind by the promotion of real Virtue, ſound Religion and undiſſembled Piety, wherever it takes place: and which perhaps is not leſs wanted in ſome other parts of Great Britain than where it has ſo happily been cultivated. It appears by the cloſe of the laſt year's account, that there have been 815 Schools ſettled and 47230 Scholars taught to read and underſtand their Catechiſm ſince the Commencement of this Charity. I ſhall take the liberty of annexing a *ſummary recital* of their method from the *farther account* from *Mich.* 1742. to *Mich.* 1743. p. 5, 6. "Where a Charity-"School is wanted and deſired, or like to be kindly received, "no pompous preparations or coſtly Buildings are thought "of, but a Church or Chapel, or untenanted Houſe of con-"venient ſituation, is fixed on; and publick notice given "immediately that a *Welch* School is to begin there, at an "appointed time, where all ſorts that deſire it are to be "kindly and freely taught for three months (though the "Schools are continued for three months longer, or more, "when needful; and then removed to another place where "deſired.) The people having no proſpect of ſuch an op-"portunity, but for a ſhort limited time, commonly reſort "to them at once, and keep to them as cloſely and diligently "as they can: though ſome can afford to come but every "other day, or in the night only, becauſe the ſupport of "themſelves and Families requires their labour. The maſters "are inſtructed, hired, and charged to devote all their time, "and with all poſſible diligence, nor only to teach the poor "to read, but to inſtruct them daily (at leaſt twice every "day) in the principles and duties of Religion from the "Church Catechiſm, by the aſſiſtance of ſuch Explanations "of it as they and the Scholars are provided with; which "they are not only to repeat out of the Book, but alſo to "give the ſenſe thereof in their own words, with a Pſalm

"and

our own ſhould be deſtitute of that pious aſſiſtance we ſo charitably extend to our Neighbours. Many well-diſpoſed perſons, it is to be feared, have been diſcouraged from contributing toward pious deſigns, by the apprehenſion they had of their Charity being improperly applied. In the preſent caſe the application will be made by the contributors themſelves; or at leaſt under their inſpection; and the happy effects of it every day ſenſibly felt.

The carrying of this Deſign into execution muſt neceſſarily fall to the lot of the Pariſh-Miniſter; and in many places may poſſibly require his liberal contribution, at leaſt till the Pariſh is made ſenſible of the benefit of it. But his labour and expence he will think well beſtowed, when ſo effectually employed for the intereſt of thoſe committed to his care; and when by the Divine Bleſſing he may thereby be enabled to gain many ſouls to Chriſt, for his Joy and Crown of rejoicing in the Day of the Lord.

1. That the erecting of the School be undertaken by the Miniſter of the Pariſh either alone, or in conjunction with one or more of the Gentlemen of

" and Prayer night and morning after Catechiſing. Every " Maſter is alſo obliged to keep a ſtrict account of the " names, ages, and conditions in the world, and progreſs in " Learning of all the Scholars; and of the Books they learn, " and the time or number of months, weeks and days that " every one of them continued in the School; that the " Maſters may be paid accordingly. This account every " Maſter is to bring in writing at the end of three months, " with proper Certificates of the truth thereof, and of their " own Behaviour, ſigned by ſuch Clergymen as condeſcend " to inſpect them, as well as by ſeveral other creditable " perſons living near the Schools."

of Intereſt in the place; who are to take upon themſelves the inſpection of it, to have the nomination of the School-maſter, and to be the proper judges who are by their circumſtances entitled to the benefit of this Charity.

2. That the School-maſter be of an unexceptionable Character, have a complete knowledge of the Principles of Religion, and be well qualified to teach the Children to read, and ſing the Church Tunes: and if the place affords proper encouragement, that he be likewiſe capable to teach Writing and Arithmetick; in which caſe the School may be ſupported at a ſmaller expence.

3. That the more ſubſtantial Inhabitants do pay for the Schooling of their own Children, at ſuch rates as have been cuſtomary in the place; which may be preſumed to be the moſt equitable, but in caſe any alteration be thought proper, that it be made by the Viſitors of the School, and agreed to by the School-maſter before his Admiſſion.

4. That the School-maſter be obliged to teach all the poor Children of the Pariſh, or ſuch as the Viſitors ſhall require him to teach, to read and to ſing the Church Tunes: in conſideration whereof, he is to have ſuch an yearly ſalary, ſuppoſe from one to ten pounds, as together with the profits ariſing from the other Children, may make a competent maintenance.

5. That all the poor Children be furniſhed with School Books; and that a certain quantity of Wood, Turf or Coals be yearly allowed for the uſe of the School, as their proportion of firing.

6. That the Viſitors by their own, and the voluntary contribution of moſt of the ſubſtantial In-

Inhabitants do yearly raiſe ſuch a ſum of Money as will anſwer the demands above-mentioned. In many Pariſhes this will not exceed four or five pounds.

7. That as in many Country Pariſhes there are Houſes upon the Waſte, for the accommodation of poor Families, one of theſe be fitted up for a School-Houſe, and furniſhed with Forms and Deſks; otherwiſe that one be hired for that purpoſe.*

8. That at the opening of the School, the names and ages of all the poor Children in the Pariſh be taken down in writing; and to prevent its being crowded, only a proper number of the oldeſt be at firſt admitted; and that as theſe are perfected the reſt ſucceed according to ſeniority.

9. That none ſhall be received into the School under five years of age, nor for a ſhorter time than a quarter of a year: and that the Parents be not allowed to call away their Children upon trifling occaſions.

10. That the School-maſter morning and night uſe a proper form of prayer at School; that he carefully inſpect the behaviour of his Scholars without doors; that he prepare them to be catechiſed by the Miniſter; and all Sundays and Holydays bring them to Church, where a proper place ſhall be allotted for their accomodation.

11. That every Sunday after Divine Service, or at ſuch times as ſhall be thought proper, the Chil-

* If the Schoolmaſter is married, and his Family can be accommodated in the School-Houſe, his ſalary may in that caſe be the ſmaller.

Children be brought to Church, to be farther catechiſed and inſtructed by the miniſter.*

12. That in Schools already erected and endowed, an additional ſalary be paid to the Maſters or Uſhers for their particular pains in *Catechiſing*; and ſome money ſet apart to be diſtributed as *Premiums* for the proficiency of Children therein.

13. That ſo many of theſe Rules be introduced into the preſent Schools, by their Viſitors or others authoriſed thereto, as their reſpective Statutes, Orders, and the Circumſtances of the place, will admit or may require.

I hope the Author of the foregoing Propoſals will not be diſpleaſed to ſee them in ſome meaſure illuſtrated, and the great uſe and neceſſity of ſuch a Plan confirmed by the Teſtimony of that pious Prelate Bp. *Beveridge*, and therefore I have taken the liberty of adding a few paſſages from the *Poſtſcript* to his very uſeful explanation of our Church-Catechiſm, wherein he offered his ſentiments to the Publick upon this ſubject above forty years ago; with what ſucceſs I am not able to ſay, but heartily wiſh that a revival of the

* 'Tis obvious that Children may ſay their Catechiſm by rote, without underſtanding any part of it; and that when an Expoſition is read to them, they may chuſe whether they will attend to it or no: It muſt be the buſineſs of the Catechiſt to put them into a way of thinking; and to deſcend to their capacity, by following ſome ſuch method as is uſed in the Society's Catechiſm broke into ſhort queſtions, or Dr. *Stebbing*'s *Young Chriſtian inſtructed*; at the ſame time enforcing the ſeveral Duties of Religion as they fall in his way. If the Children were inſtructed in this manner every Sunday, it is to be hoped that perſons of more advanced years would likewiſe attend and be profited by it.

ſcheme and ſhewing it in various lights, may help to gain it ſome attention now, and prove at length a means of its reception and encouragement, in this or any other ſhape, as may appear beſt ſuited to the preſent times and circumſtances: in which ſomething or other of that kind ſeems to be no leſs requiſite than formerly, and which in ſeveral reſpects are better qualified than ever to accompliſh it.

P. 156.—There are Pariſhes ſo very large and populous that it is morally impoſſible for their reſpective Miniſters to inſtruct all the Children and ignorant perſons that are in them. This ſeems to be foreſeen in making the law *relating to that ſubject:* for it is there provided, that the Curate of every Pariſh ſhall every *Lord's-Day* inſtruct and examine ſo many of the Children of the Pariſh as he ſhall think convenient. And therefore he ſatisfies the law, who inſtructs ſome at one time, and ſome at another, ſo many as he conveniently can. But by this means the Curate in ſome Pariſhes can ſcarce go through all in a whole year; and then all the other will be neglected and ſuffered to continue in their ignorance.

Neither do I ſee how this can be prevented in ſuch great Pariſhes any other way than by erecting *Catechetical Schools*, ſuch as were uſual in the primitive times, and contributed very much to the Propagation of the Goſpel. There was ſuch a School at *Alexandria*, ſo ancient that it was thought to be begun by Saint *Mark* the Evangeliſt; of which the two famous men, *Pantænus* and *Clemens Alexandrinus* were ſucceſſively Maſters. *Origen* alſo taught in the ſame School, and afterwards in ſuch

ſuch another at *Cæſarea*; and ſo did Saint *Cyrill* at *Hieruſalem*, who was afterwards Biſhop of the Place; whoſe Expoſitions of the Principles of our holy Religion, which he made, as it is ſuppoſed, when he was only a Deacon and Catechiſt, are ſtill extant, and highly eſteemed, as they deſerve. And indeed this ſeems to have been a great part of the *Deacon*'s Office in thoſe days. They were not only to take care of the Poor, but to inſtruct the Ignorant, or at leaſt aſſiſt the *Prieſts* in doing it. And ſo it is, or ought to be, at this day among us, by the Orders and Conſtitutions of our Church. which in this, as in all other particulars, keeps cloſe to the pattern of the Primitive and Apoſtolical. As appears from the Form of Ordering a Deacon: for there the Biſhop tells him who is Ordained, That it appertains to the Office of a Deacon, in the Church where he ſhall be appointed to ſerve, among other things *to inſtruct the Youth in the Catechiſm.* And then he ſolemnly promiſeth that he will do ſo, *by the help of God.* Whereby the Church layeth as great an obligation as can be well made, upon every one that is Ordained, to inſtruct the Youth of the Pariſh, where he is to ſerve. And none can be admitted to the Office, unleſs he have a Title to ſome place where he may ſerve God and the Church in the execution of it.

Now if this was duly obſerved, it would conduce very much to the furtherance of this great work: for *Deacons* being obliged by the Law to continue one whole year at leaſt in that, before they are advanced to the higher Order, if they all Catechiſed the Youth of the Places where they

ſerve all that time, the Youth of ſuch Places would, at leaſt for that time, be taken care of: and they themſelves by teaching others would learn more, and be better fitted for the Prieſthood, than by any other Studies which they can follow in the mean while. And if none could be ordained Prieſts without Letters Teſtimonial, that they have faithfully executed this, as well as the other parts of the Deacon's Office, it would make them more diligent and careful to perform what they promiſed at their Ordination. This therefore being an Office which Deacons, as well as thoſe in higher Orders, may and ought to execute, and there being ſo many Deacons every year ordained in our Church, out of them, together with thoſe who are already admitted to the Prieſthood, and are out of place (of which there are too many) all the great Pariſhes may be ſupplied with as many as are needful to the inſtructing of all the Children and ignorant People in them, ſo as that the Incumbents may have no more to do in this buſineſs than what they may eaſily compaſs. For they being all before inſtructed in one or more private Schools, according to the extent of the Pariſh, the Miniſter upon the *Lord's Day* need only examine in the Church as many as he thinks convenient at one time, to ſee whether they be fully and rightly inſtructed, and at another time as many more, and ſo by degrees go through the whole Pariſh, and then begin again with thoſe which he firſt examined: for by this means there will not be that neceſſity of examining the ſame perſons publickly every *Lord's Day*: for they all continuing to be inſtructed in the Schools, they will

will not loſe what they have learned, as they otherwiſe would, but rather learn more than perhaps they could at Church. And if they be at Church too, as they ought to be, while the other are inſtructed and examined, they may receive the ſame benefit there, as if they themſelves alſo were ſo. This I the rather obſerve here, leſt any ſhould think that theſe private Catechetical Schools might ſuperſede the Miniſter's Duty of Catechiſing publickly in the Church. For this is what the Law requires, and the private Inſtructions are only in order to the having ſo good a Law better obſerved. And beſides, as the Miniſter to whom the care of the Youth is committed, muſt have an eye to the private Schools, to ſee whether they be rightly inſtructed there; ſo it is requiſite that he ſhould inſtruct and examine them in publick, that his Pariſhioners likewiſe may be ſatisfied as well as he, that they are ſo, and may be thereby alſo put in mind of many things which otherwiſe they might not think of.

And I hope there is never a Paſtor in the Church that will think this below him, upon which depends the ſafety of ſo great a part of his flock as the Lambs are, which he is expreſsly alſo commanded to feed as well as the Sheep, and that too in the firſt place. *Joh.* 21. 15, 16, 17. I am ſure the great Apoſtle did not think ſo when he ſolemnly profeſſed, that although *he ſpake with tongues more than all* thoſe he wrote to; *yet in the Church he had rather ſpeak five words with his underſtanding that he might Catechiſe others alſo* (ſo it is in the original) *than ten thouſand words in an unknown tongue.* 1 Cor. 14. 18, 19. But the main difficulty will

will be in getting ſuch Schools for the Children and Servants of the rich, as well as the poor (for whom there are Charity Schools already in ſome places), ſet up in all Pariſhes that have occaſion for them, beſides the Grammar and other Schools, if there be any, where the Maſters ought to inſtruct their Scholars in the *Church Catechiſm*, as well as in any other Science, Art or Language. In many ſuch Pariſhes the Maintenance of the Miniſter is ſo ſmall, that it cannot be expected that he ſhould do it himſelf: where it is otherwiſe, I doubt not but that he who is intruſted with the care of all the ſouls in the Pariſh, will do what he can towards it; as many do already. But as the caſe now ſtands with us, I do not ſee how it can be univerſally practiſed, as it ought to be, without the liberal contribution of pious and well-diſpoſed Chriſtians.

But, praiſed be God for it, we have ſtill ſome among us, who, out of a deep ſenſe of their Duty, and pure Zeal for the Honour of Almighty God, are as forward and free to any pious and good work, as if they could merit by it: and ſuch can never expreſs their Piety and Charity both together any other way better, if ſo well as this, which hath an immediate tendency both to the Glory of the moſt high God our Maker and moſt merciful Redeemer; and likewiſe to the Salvation of ſo many thouſand Souls; as well as to the Benefit of the Church and Kingdom in which they live; and that too, not only for the preſent, but for all future Ages.

THE END.